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# New Evangelicalism, *Christianity Today*, and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1956-1965

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The visibility of modern evangelicalism rose in 1956 with the creation of *Christianity Today*, a Billy Graham brainchild. Based in Washington, DC and financially supported by conservative J. Howard Pew, the president of Sun Oil Company, the bi-weekly publication became the rallying voice for “New Evangelicalism.” Under the editorialship of Carl Henry, a conservative evangelical theologian, the journal’s mission included influencing national policy and its first ten years provides a wealth of discourse on “new evangelical” understanding of American foreign policy and communism. The dominant language of new evangelicals favored a Christian realism supportive of a hawkish foreign policy with the use of nuclear weaponry, if necessary, to oppose the atheistic communist “other.” New evangelicals voiced their understanding of what constituted America’s vital interests and effectively used emotional language to substantiate the perceived moral correctness of foreign policy positions.<sup>1</sup>

New Evangelicalism originated in the 1940s when a number of fundamentalist Christian scholars, who rejected the parochialism and anti-intellectualism found in fundamentalism, sought ways to make evangelical

beliefs more relevant to society.<sup>1</sup> One key new evangelical (postfundamentalist neo-evangelical) leader seeking to transform fundamentalism was Carl F. H. Henry, a newspaper reporter, who after earning a PhD at Boston College became a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. The birth of *Christianity Today* (CT) in 1956 with Henry as editor provided new evangelical reformers with the means to preserve and promote their new perspective on a broader scale.<sup>2</sup> From 1956 to 1965, American foreign policy and communism received a surprising amount of attention in editorials, articles, commentaries, and letters to the editor. Twenty percent of editorials focused on foreign and defense policy and communism accounted for 11 percent of all editorials.<sup>3</sup> Such attention paid to communism and US foreign relations is especially significant given that every two weeks

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1. Evangelicalism represents Christian individuals who affirm the Bible as ultimate religious authority, the New Birth, "an energetic, individualistic approach to religious duties and social involvement," and "a focus on Christ's redeeming work as the heart of essential Christianity" [Mark Noll et al, eds. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond 1700-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6]. Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (New York: Penguins, 1987), explains the distinction of evangelicals and fundamentalists as follows: "Evangelicals knew what the problem of fundamentalist manners was, and spelled it out when they said they would never resort to bigotry, intolerance, misrepresentation, hate, jealousy, false judgment, and hypocrisy - all of which made fundamentalists look like barbarians to the rest of America" (411). For a separatist fundamentalist critique of new evangelicalism see Ernest Pickering, *Biblical Separation: The Struggle for a Pure Church* (Schaumburg, Illinois: Regular Baptist Press, 1982), 127-138. The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) provided the new evangelicals with their own major organization. The NAE formed in 1942 taking its name in order to distinguish the Association from separate fundamentalists and theological liberals. Interestingly, the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in America, did not see the need to join the NAE. One Convention Baptist claimed that "evangelical" was a "Yankee word." See D.G. Hart, "Southern Baptists and Yankee Evangelicals Together?" *Evangelical Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 1-2.

2. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 204. Also see David L. Weeks, "Carl F. H. Henry's Moral Arguments for Evangelical Political Activism," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Winter 1998), 83-106, and Mark G. Toulouse, "Christianity Today and American Public Life: A Case Study," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring 1993), 241-284.

3. J. David Fairbanks, "The Politics of Christianity Today: 1956-1986" in Corwin E. Smidt, ed., *Contemporary Evangelical Political Development: An Analysis and Assessment* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 32-33. Thirty-eight percent of editorials, in the first ten years, addressed political topics.

approximately 200,000 copies of *CT*, with its 50 contributing editors, reached readers nation wide, many of whom were clergy with their own spheres of influence.

Scholars examining language have made important contributions in identifying oppositional identity categories expressed in American foreign policy rhetoric that resonated with the mass electorate. Recent studies on the speeches of American presidents identify a mode of argument in which the world consists of two opposing camps, one side representing a set of virtues that upholds religious faith, moral insight, and God's will, the other side in opposition. By using rhetoric based in "prophetic dualism," state managers maintained the moral and spiritual superiority of US foreign policy, shunned compromise, stifled debate, and demanded "total victory" over atheistic communism, all "easily communicated to and understood by the mass public."<sup>4</sup> New evangelicals nurtured and reinforced this construct of "self/other relations" by creating powerful images and dramas of villains in religious terms, a process sure to be effective because of the centrality of religion in American culture and because Americans responded better to their images of situations rather than to "objective facts."<sup>5</sup>

Modern history of totalitarian rule, world wars, and the Korean conflict confirmed to new evangelicals of the dangers of false optimism concerning peace and global stability and the essential task of injecting Christian discussion into international issues.<sup>6</sup> Joseph Simonson, former United States Ambassador to Ethiopia and a Lutheran minister, told *CT* readers that the

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4. Philip Wander, "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Volume 70, Number 4 (November 1984), 339-361; Mary E. Stuckey, "Remembering the Future: Rhetorical Echoes of World War II and Vietnam in George Bush's Public Speech on the Gulf War," *Communication Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter 1992), 246-247; and Mary E. Stuckey, "Competing Foreign Policy Visions: Rhetorical Hybrids After the Cold War," *Western Journal of Communication*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Summer 1995), 215-216. On the importance of emotion and language in interpreting threats to America, see Frank Costigliola, "The Creation of Memory and Myth: Stalin's 1946 Election Speech and the Soviet Threat" in Martin J. Medhurst and H.W. Brands, eds., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 38-54.

5. On "self/other relations" see Roberta L. Coles, "War and the Contest over National Identity," *Sociological Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (November 2002), 589. On religion and American culture see Kenneth D. Wald, "The Religious Dimension of American Anti-Communism," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (1994), 483-506. On people's response to images, see Stuckey, "Competing Foreign Policy Visions," 215-216.

6. Paul Peachey, "Beyond Christian-Communist Strife," *CT*, 27 October 1958, 15.

Christian “must be an informed, active participant in the determination of his country’s foreign policy and vigilant watchman of its execution.”<sup>7</sup> Even in the wake of the successful conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Billy Graham warned of “false security,” reminding readers of communist victories throughout the world over the past fifteen years.<sup>8</sup> Concerning the devious nature of communist diplomacy, the words of Harold Kuhn echoed throughout most issues of *CT*: “the Soviet masters mold it into an instrument by which cheap conquests are made, and by which maps are redrawn in such a manner as to extend Communist hegemony and / or secure the imperialist and expansionist interests of the super-state.”<sup>9</sup> Walter S. Robertson, assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, told readers that communism “despises religion. It denies the existence of God.”<sup>10</sup> There was much at stake and new evangelicals had an important role to play in identifying the nefarious nature of the “other.” *CT* was the only religious press that had a representative to accompany Nikita Khrushchev on his tour of the United States.<sup>11</sup>

While much of the writing found in *CT* upheld high intellectual standards, a few correspondents with questionable evangelical credentials used blanket denunciations and melodrama and metaphor that bordered on hyperbole. For example, in one of his several articles published in *CT*, J. Edgar Hoover wrote: “The Communists are today spraying the world with ideological and propaganda missiles designed to create a deadly radioactive cloud of Marxism-Leninism.... The Communists realize that unless the Christian pulpit—the mighty fortress of God—is liquidated, pitilessly, mercifully, finally, the very existence of communism itself stands in jeopardy.”<sup>12</sup>

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7. Joseph Simonson, “Christian Ideals in Foreign Policy,” *CT*, 24 June, 1957, 7.

8. Billy Graham, “Facing the Anti-God Colossus,” *CT*, 21 December 1962, 6.

9. “Review of Current Religious Thought,” *CT*, 10 May 1963, 56.

10. “Walter S. Robertson, “Meeting Communism in the Far East,” *CT*, 13 April 1959, 11.

11. “Did Khrushchev see America?” *CT*, 12 October 1959, 32.

12. J. Edgar Hoover, “Communist Propaganda and the Christian Pulpit,” *CT*, 24 October 1960, 5. According to Fred Pierce Corson, “Atheism in Communism is militantly committed to eradicating Christianity. As an instrument of destruction it is no less powerful than Russia’s nuclear weapons.” See “Facing the Communist Menace,” *CT*, 27 April 1962, 4.

Perhaps more effective was the emotional discourse of the persecution and brutality experienced by native believers and missionaries. Henlee H. Barnette of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky travelled to Russia in 1957 and wrote that school teachers subjected children with slogans such as: "Religion is poison" or "When God is forgotten life is better," and that preachers who criticized the government faced penalty of death or banishment to Siberian slave camps.<sup>13</sup> One visitor to Czechoslovakia noted that pastors faced a heavy penalty "for praying in a home or inviting anyone to church."<sup>14</sup> The Ambassador of the Republic of China to the United States reported that communist terrorists stoned one Chinese pastor to death because he opposed reform and that Chinese university students began an "Eat the Bible Society," a strategy to memorize assigned portions of the Bible in order to prepare for the day when no Bibles would exist in communist China.<sup>15</sup> Other chilling stories from China included a woman evangelist tied and pulled apart by horses sent running in opposing directions, the torturing of Christians by pouring water in their mouths until their stomachs bulge, the cutting off of women's breasts and stories of women stripped and nailed to a wall to die.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Kyunk Chik Han of Young Nak Presbyterian Church, Seoul spoke of massacres in North Korea, where communists gathered Christians and killed them with machine gun fire.<sup>17</sup> On Russian forces suppressing the Hungary revolt and the brief freedom of Hungarian churches in late 1956, commentators spoke of "Russian butchery," defenseless people "slaughtered like cattle," the "merciless rape of Hungary," and unknown future of "streets of desolation and rivers of young blood."<sup>18</sup> Clarifying to readers of the terrible challenges that Ukrainians faced from Russian hegemony, Wladimir Borowsky of the Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance of North America wrote of the inhuman oppression Ukrainians experienced within the USSR.<sup>19</sup> Closer to the

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13. Henlee H. Barnette, "Christ and Marx: The Church in Soviet Russia," *CT*, 23 December 1957, 4.

14. "Red Propaganda," *CT*, 12 September 1960, 16.

15. Hollington K. Tong, "Christianity in China," *CT*, 21 January 1957, 13.

16. "Red Atrocities," *CT*, 22 June 1959, 29.

17. "The Communist Terror: The Plight of the Korean Christians," *CT*, 25 September 1961, 35.

18. "12 Days of Life," *CT*, 26 November 1956, 35; Charles W. Lowry, "Judgement on the Christian West," *CT*, 7 January 1957, 25.

19. "U.S. Protestant Press," *CT*, 6 June 1960, 17. On persecution in Byelorussia see

United States were reports of thousands of Bibles destroyed and of persecution and execution of clergy by order of the Cuban government.<sup>20</sup>

Freedom-loving readers of *CT* found ample examples of the grave danger of “demonic” Soviet imperialism, the struggles of Christians in communist lands, and the oppressive nature of secret police and state restrictions on freedom of religion. Rhetorical texts laden with powerful images and symbols concerning American foreign relations enlisted the sympathies of the reader for the defeat of the atheistic and evil “other.” The motive for using excessively emotional rhetoric was not always clear. In more specific cases, the purpose of atrocity literature could be for the raising of financial support for various evangelistic activities in communist lands where politicians were hostile to the Gospel. Also, such literature may have been viewed as a corrective to pacifist arguments that were too accommodating and naïve in the eyes of some evangelicals.

Given the strong incentives for evangelism and missionary efforts globally, it is not surprising that foreign policy received the attention it did among new evangelical leaders. A common position expressed was the desperate need for a spiritual and ethical rebirth of foreign policy that appreciated unregenerate human nature.<sup>21</sup> Acknowledging the sinful state of humankind, Billy Graham preached to one Pentagon crowd of 7,000 people that “Christ did not come into the world to bring peace, but a sword.”<sup>22</sup> On the issue of military preparedness, the dominant perspective of new evangelicals called for vigilance and aggressive military response to Soviet movements throughout the world. In a September, 1957, Carl Henry stated the correct response to communism’s political absolutism of “might makes right” was to maintain nuclear testing and avoid any “romantic idealism” that precondemned the United States to suicide in the face of a world power making “no pretense of its goal of world revolution.” While Henry averred that fellowship with Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer, the atomic bomb served as the means to peaceful existence.<sup>23</sup> In another editorial he was

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“A Campaign Against Christianity,” *CT*, 6 December 1963, 36. For more, see “A Cry for the Oppressed,” *CT*, 14 February 1964, 39; J.C. Pollock, “Christian Youth in Soviet Schools,” *CT*, 28 August 1964, 3-5; and “Persecution in Russia,” *CT*, 1 January 1965, 25.

20. “Cuban Tribulation,” *CT*, 12 April 1963, 41; “Persecution of Evangelicals in Cuba,” *CT*, 8 November 1963, 32. Also, “Cuban Arrests,” *CT*, 23 April 1965, 50.

21. For example, “The Spirit of Foreign Policy,” *CT*, 29 April 1957, 20-23.

22. “Graham Crusade Stirs National Capitol Area,” *CT*, 4 July 1960, 25.

23. “Christ and the Atom Bomb,” *CT*, 2 September 1957, 20-22 He stated that “the

more specific on communist aggression, stating that Peking could engineer a war in Asia and thus allow Russia to take control of the oil-rich Middle East. Again Henry clarified that Christians act with realism by upholding Christian principles and maintaining “the weapons necessary to deter evil men and nations and the will to exercise those means if necessary.”<sup>24</sup> Henry was even thankful for U-2 spy flights over Russia because “espionage is evil only as it is carried out with aggression in mind.”<sup>25</sup>

H.H. Lippincott, clergyman and retired Commander of the United States Navy, warned of the 800,000,000 communists in the world who were “all militant atheists” and the “sentimental prophets” who sought termination of nuclear weapon development that would result in the United States becoming a Russian satellite and world government by the USSR: “The blood of freemen runs cold at the thought of liberty-loving people in high position expressing a deliberate willingness to accept ‘a Communist dominated world.’” Lippincott believed that if the time arrived, the West must exercise “grim greatness” and allow men the noble end of going “out like moral men” rather than succumbing to slave status in order to survive.<sup>26</sup> In a similar vein, Harold John Ockenga, former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, explained in May 1961 how America should react to communism: “Firmness must be backed up by military strength and force. We may be thankful that our nation had courage enough to move into Korea, into Lebanon, into Formosa, and to declare that aggressive acts on the part of the Communists brought us to the brink of war. The same courage should be manifested in reference to Berlin.”<sup>27</sup> Charles Wesley Lowry, president of The Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civil Order, recommended the use of a tactical nuclear weapon even if the Soviets only used conventional forces to isolate West Berlin. “Because the stakes are freedom and hope,” wrote Lowry, the American government had to be willing to take “the risk of acceleration into general

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cession of nuclear bomb tests is no more the world’s real hope for peace in this decade than the organization of the United Nations was in the last.”

24. “Joint Moscow-Peking Threat Calls for Christian Realism,” *CT*, 4 March 1957, 23. Also, see “The Communist Surge,” *CT*, 23 June 1958, 14.

25. “God’s Judgement on the Summit,” *CT*, 6 June 1960, 20.

26. H.H. Lippincott, “World Government and Christianity,” *CT*, 3 February 1958, 5 and “Nuclear Threat and Soviet Russia,” *CT*, 27 October 1958, 13-15.

27. Harold John Ockenga, “The Communist Issue Today,” *CT*, 22 May 1961, 12.

nuclear war.”<sup>28</sup> Besides, as Baptist clergyman the Reverend Morris E. Scutt pointed out, “about the only difference between atomic weapons and so-called conventional weapons is their greater destructive force” and that “the suffering involved in an atomic war would in no way compare with the suffering meted out at the hands of the Communists.”<sup>29</sup>

The most notable proponent of the concept of a just war and the use of nuclear weapons was retired Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, who opposed appeasement because it encouraged an aggressor to greater acts of assault. As he saw it, nuclear weapons were a military necessity. But what about the danger to Soviet non-combatants including followers of Christ? Harrison constructs the “other.” Not only are non-combatant deaths “an inevitable accompaniment of war,” but non-combatants are also guilty of aggression because they are bound by the decisions of their leaders. According to Harrison, “wars of conquest are launched by the ruler with the active or passive support of the nation, without which he would not dare to start military action.” Based on Harrison’s interpretation that United States foreign policy was non-aggressive, only the Soviet people would be guilty for their own destruction from American nuclear bombs sent in retaliation. Because the Soviet Union represented imperialistic aggression, “the massive destruction caused by nuclear weapons is not an ethical bar against their use in a war justifiable by other moral considerations.”<sup>30</sup>

Prophetic dualism appeared again in his January 7, 1966 article entitled “Is the United States Right in Bombing North Viet Nam?” Harrison repeated that enemy aggressiveness required a clear military counter-response since failing to do so meant deserting the South Vietnamese, “humiliation, loss of prestige and influence in the world,” and likely the loss of all of Southeast Asia to the communists. Reflecting on the past, Harrison maintained Korea would have been unified under a democracy if bombing had been permitted in Manchuria during the Korean War. As for bombs killing non-combatants, “the basic reason persons are endangered is that their government, in precipitating the war, actually exposes them to its destructive effect. It and they accept this risk.” Because people

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28. Charles Wesley Lowry, “A Plea for Realism: Perspective on the Power Struggle,” *CT*, 11 May 1962, 3-5.

29. “Better Red than Dead?” *CT*, 27 April 1962, 47.

30. William K. Harrison, “A Christian General’s View: Is Nuclear War Justifiable?” *CT*, 21 June 1963, 3-5.

could overthrow their government if they disagreed with the decision of leaders, “the mass of the people must share the responsibility for engaging in war and risking the consequences.” Political leaders make the decisions, but such decisions “could have no meaning without the active and passive support of the population.” Harrison also discounted arguments that stated bombing Vietnam could draw China into the conflict: “Bombing of the North Viet Nam is a warning to the Communist Chinese of action that would be very dangerous to them, and therefore is a deterrent rather than an incitement to intervention.” If the United States was serious about victory, it had to accept the risk of Chinese intervention. Relying on biblical prophecy, Harrison saw no hope for peace until “the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

Letters to the editor and other non-essay literature were no less demanding. In a letter to the editor, James Meaders of the Northside Wesleyan Methodist Church, Chamblee, Georgia applauded the journal for exposing “leftists, defeatists, pacifists, and communists,” stating the need for “men and women with enough intestinal fortitude to cry ‘give me liberty or give me death.’” Without sacrifice we “will become enslaved (and possibly slaughtered) under a ‘one-world government’ directed from Moscow. It is better to die for something, than to live the life of a compromiser.”<sup>32</sup> In one issue, several clergy comments published on foreign policy were clearly tough: “a firmer stand toward Russia... whose pledged work cannot be trusted. Oh, for a Teddy Roosevelt!; ‘no dealings with Russia, no recognition of Red China,’ ‘firmer policy with regard to Red Countries...’”<sup>33</sup>

Echoing the views of most new evangelicals, Clyde W. Taylor, public affairs secretary of the NAE, doubted the value of a limited nuclear test ban treaty with Russia, which had violated all but three of 53 treaties. Many new evangelicals were anathema to the idea of securing agreements with a godless power that sought to destroy the United States.<sup>34</sup> One commentator identified a “peace” minister or “peace” priest as a euphemism for

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31. “William K. Harrison, “Is the United States Right in Bombing North Viet Nam?” *CT*, 7 January 1966. 25-26.

32. “War and Peace,” *CT*, 8 June 1959, 24.

33. “Where Do We Go From Here?” *CT*, 12 November 1956, 17.

34. “Test Ban: Fears and Hopes,” *CT*, 30 August 1963, 58.

“fellow traveller.”<sup>35</sup> Organizations that minimized the vices of the Soviet Union, supported the idea of “peaceful co-existence” or criticized American foreign policy as too anti-communist received strong criticism from new evangelicals. Targets included the National Council of Churches, which represented mainline and liberal churches, and the World Peace Council.<sup>36</sup> Carl Henry himself went to considerable lengths to point out the illusory aspects of US foreign policy on disarmament and “better Red than dead” philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Spicing his prophetic dualism with aggressive masculinity, Sherwood Wirt wrote that the nation needed “men strong in their manhood, men of backbone and spirit and heart and dash and tenacity” rather than “survival-obsessed, spineless people” who gave in easily to “Castro, the United Nations, or the World Federalists.”<sup>38</sup>

According to *CT*'s contributing editors, the international political issues most challenging to evangelical prospects, in 1960, were the communist threats to the United Nations.<sup>39</sup> Other years also witnessed considerable criticism of the UN. In one issue, letters to the editors were three for and three against, including one reader fearing that left-wing forces were steering the UN toward world government.<sup>40</sup> Although the results of one *CT* questionnaire of clergy showed a seven to five edge for UN supporters, those who opposed the UN used strong language such as “take U.S. out of the U.N. and U.N. out of the U.S.”<sup>41</sup> One writer spurned the idea that Americans should depend on the United Nations to maintain security in

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35. “Tolerance or Manipulation: Christianity Behind the Iron Curtain,” *CT*, 20 July 1962, 27.

36. “NCC Wins a Skirmish on Subversion in the Churches,” *CT*, 14 March 1960, 22; “What Role for the Churches? The Communist ‘Peace’ Front,” *CT*, 3 July 1961, 22-24. For another critique of the NCC, see “Christianity and Communism,” *CT*, 16 March 1962, 26-29. On the shortcoming of the *Christian Century* and liberal Protestant arguments see Frank Farrell, “Instability of Liberal Social Ethics,” *CT*, 2 February 1962, 15-20.

37. “What Are the Pacifists Doing?” *CT*, 26 October 1962, 28-32. Given the timing in relationship to the Cuban Missile Crisis, this particular article was timely. Also, see “Misunderstanding the Sermon a Pacifist Fallacy,” *CT*, 22 June 1962, 22; and Harold B. Kuhn, “Christian Surrender to Communism,” *CT*, 2 March 1959, 9-11.

38. Sherwood Wirt, “Who Owns the Government?” *CT*, 18 June 1964, 19. For more on masculine cold warriors see Eric R. Crouse, “Popular Cold Warriors: Conservative Protestants, Communism, and Culture in Early Cold War America,” *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, Vol. 2 (Fall 2002), 1-13.

39. “Year’s End: A Sound of Battle,” *CT*, 5 December 1960, 22.

40. “U.N. Town Meeting,” *CT*, 29 April, 1957, 24.

41. “Where Do We Go From Here?” *CT*, 12 November 1956, 17.

the Far East, referring to the ineffectiveness of the United Nations during the Korean War, when 90 percent of the forces were American.<sup>42</sup> In the first issue of *CT*, Carl Henry wrote: "The United Nations, with which the West has cast its lot, includes not only the U.S.S.R. and its veto but also lesser powers with scant sympathy for democracy or who, like France, seem to prefer a death-bed struggle to the disavowal of imperial colonialism."<sup>43</sup> Pointing to the error of American acceptance of Russia as a member of the United Nations, Lee Somers of Champaign, Illinois predicted that the UN "will inevitably become a Communist-Atheist dominated organization."<sup>44</sup> L. Nelson Bell, father-in-law to Billy Graham, wanted to see the United States sever all diplomatic ties with communism and the expulsion of every communist nation from the UN.<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant General Harrison introduced notions of biblical endtime prophecies when he characterized the United Nations as a one-world concept that could lead to the rise of a brilliant leader who expected people to surrender their freedoms for the promises of peace and prosperity.<sup>46</sup> H.E. Kershner, President of the Christian Freedom Foundation, New York implied that greater power for the UN would result in the downfall of Protestant Christianity.<sup>47</sup>

As with the issue of the UN, the topic of recognizing Red China generated much emotion from evangelicals with one poll by *CT* revealing an eight-to-one margin of opposition to US recognition of Communist China.<sup>48</sup> The NAE even opposed visits by church delegates to China arguing that such actions would discourage Chinese evangelical leaders, provide a sanitized picture of Chinese persecution, encourage US policymakers to recognize communist China, and imply US acceptance of government-approved Chinese church leaders often referred to as collabo-

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42. "Admit Red China?" *CT*, 29 October 1956, 11.

43. Carl F.H. Henry, "The Fragility of Freedom in the West," *CT*, 15 October 1956, 8.

44. "Christ and Marx," *CT*, 19 December 1960, 12. (?)

45. "A Layman and his Faith: When Judgement Comes," *CT*, 18 July 1960, 19.

46. "Reminiscences and a Prophecy," *CT*, 4 March 1957, 13-15. Harrison noted that Israel would be "in the vortex of the conflict." Also, William K. Harrison refers to the "terrible tribulation" of end days in "Christianity and Peace in Our Days," *CT*, 29 October 1956,

47. "UN and Christianity," *CT*, 17 March 1958, 26. If the UN became more powerful, "Christianity, much less Protestant Christianity, won't have a chance, not even a hope..."

48. "Reader Poll," *CT*, 16 February 1959, 30.

rators.<sup>49</sup> *CT* concurred.<sup>50</sup> Carl Henry argued that recognition of the USSR had resulted in “bitter frustration and disillusionment to the American people.” As he saw it, American refusal to recognize Red China and entrance in the United Nations, in light of Chinese aggression in Korea and the blood purges in China, represents “the greatest factor in international morality today.”<sup>51</sup> Robert Lloyd Roberts’s letter to the editor stated that Red China did not require United Nations recognition as it has representation through Russia.<sup>52</sup> One US Ambassador wrote how prominent leaders of the Nationalist government of Free China and a growing number of people in Taiwan accepted Christianity, the lesson being that Christian faith could thrive in a land uncontrolled by communist ideology.<sup>53</sup> Readers such as one Episcopal missionary teacher, who despaired of foreign policy based on secular expediency, congratulated *CT* for its leadership and opposition to the recognition of Red China.<sup>54</sup> One of the better-known anti-communist correspondents was Fred C. Schwarz of the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, Long Beach, California. Referring to a clergy delegation sent to China that provided reports spiced with communist propaganda, Schwarz asked: “Will a ‘Red Dean’ emerge from the evangelical ranks? Will the church cooperate with the forces dedicated to its destruction?”<sup>55</sup> Positions at odds with *CT* critical position toward China came from letters to the editor, but they were few in number.<sup>56</sup>

Outside of Europe and Asia, Cuba garnered more attention than any other region. *CT* even commissioned Adon Taft, the religious editor of the

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49. “China Visits Hit,” *CT*, 21 January 1957, 28.

50. For example see “Conversations with Chinese Christians,” *CT*, 21 January 1957, 20-23. The NAE in 1960 numbered 41 denominations and hundreds of individual congregations and served a constituency of about 10,000,000. See “NAE Reaffirms Strong Anti-Communist Stand,” *CT*, 9 May 1960, 30.

51. On Hungary and U.S.S.R. expulsion see “Christian Responsibility and Communist Brutality,” *CT*, 26 November 1956, 24. “Red China and World Morality,” *CT*, 10 December 1956, 20-21.

52. “NCC,” *CT*, 27 April 1959, 26. According to Roberts, “we gave our absurd recognition to Red Russia before World War II. For that mistake we have paid and will yet pay and pay...”

53. Hollington K. Tong, “Christianity in China,” *CT*, 21 January 1957, 10.

54. “Recognition of Red China,” *CT*, 21 January 1957, 18-19.

55. “Delegations to Red China,” *CT*, 1 April 1957, 17-18.

56. For an example of support for recognition see letter by Lowell Messerschmidt, Zion Church, Batavia, Wisconsin (“Recognition of Red China,” *CT*, 21 January 1957, 18).

*Miami Herald*, to provide reports. Taft suggested that Fidel Castro was under the spell of avowed Communist Che Guevara.<sup>57</sup> In August 1960, Carl Henry evoked the names of James Monroe and Teddy Roosevelt in his criticism of American foreign policy toward Castro.<sup>58</sup> The following year, Henry complained that “sentimentality in international affairs” caused the decline of US prestige, specifically when the United States failed “to give effective support to the counter-thrust for Cuban freedom.”<sup>59</sup> Billy Graham and other new evangelical leaders supported President Kennedy’s actions against Cuba in October 1962.<sup>60</sup> According to *CT*, the results of the crisis demonstrated that America correctly and “firmly declared her determination to resist tyrannical aggressors, even if war should result.”<sup>61</sup> Less than three months after the crisis, Taft even hinted of an imminent American-supported invasion.<sup>62</sup>

Only a few letters to the editor opposed the moral certainty and military solutions promoted in the “prophetic dualism” of Christianity versus the atheist “other.” Lloyd Shank of Mt. Union, Pennsylvania wrote: “While I would expect ... popular, sensational magazines to glorify war and the god of American nationalism, I thought CHRISTIANITY TODAY would extol the pacifism exemplified by Christ more than it has.”<sup>63</sup> Millard G. Wilson of First Church of the Brethren, Lansing, Michigan found it difficult to understand how evangelicals believed “so completely in the power of the Cross to give victory over sin, and then repudiate that Cross by saying we will take the way of violence.”<sup>64</sup> Pointing out the reality of totalitarian leadership, Clifford Anderson questioned William Harrison’s indictment that an entire populace would be guilty of aggression brought on by fanatical rulers. William Lowe of Berlin Bible Church, Narrowsburg, New York asked “can anyone imagine Jesus Christ taking a gun to defend himself, or his disciples?”<sup>65</sup>

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57. “Castro Allegiance Divides Cuban Christians,” *CT*, 12 September 1960, 12.

58. “Cuba Situation Becomes a Battle for the Hemisphere,” *CT*, 1 August 1960, 24.

59. “The Fiasco in Cuba and Freedom’s Supports,” *CT*, 8 May 1961, 26.

60. “Crisis Evangelism in Latin America,” *CT*, 23 November 1962, 32.

61. “Has America Awakened at Last?” *CT*, 9 November 1962, 28.

62. “Compassion for the Cubans,” *CT*, 18 January 1963, 31.

63. “Vacuum Only Apparent,” *CT*, 3 August 1959, 16.

64. “The Communist Issue,” *CT*, 3 July 1961,

65. “War,” *CT*, 2 August 1963, 16.

The dominant new evangelical voice favored a hawkish foreign policy. But did such thinking have an impact on policy makers? Shedding light on “agency” and the impact of religious culture on foreign policy, studies by Andrew Rotter, Andrew Johnston, and Seth Jacobs clarify that “policymaking does not occur in a vacuum.”<sup>66</sup> However, proving a relationship between evangelical ideas and foreign policies is virtually impossible. While there is no clear evidence that new evangelicals had a significant impact on foreign policy decisions, policymakers did adopt religious language that shared common ground with most Americans. Richard Pierard’s work on Billy Graham indicates that Graham’s hard-line stand on communism essentially reflected the conventional wisdom of most Americans, especially those who linked Americanism and anti-communism. For Americans, there was no ambiguity in Graham’s pronouncement that the world was “divided into two camps” and in his condemnation of communism in emotional and apocalyptic terms.<sup>67</sup> In his study on Protestantism and the Cold War, David Settje uses polling data to show that Cold War views within the Protestant community closely paralleled the response of average Americans.<sup>68</sup>

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66. Andrew J. Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and U.S.-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Fall 2000), 593-613; Andrew Johnston, “Massive Retaliation and the Specter of Salvation: Religious Imagery, Nationalism and Dulles’s Nuclear Strategy, 1952-1954,” Unpublished Paper sent to this author, February 2002; and Seth Jacobs, “‘Our System Demands the Supreme Being’: The U.S. Religious Revival and the ‘Dien Experiment,’ 1954-55,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2001), 589-624. Rotter acknowledges John Foster Dulles’s version of America as a Christian nation in which the success of the nation hinged on an understanding that foreign policy and spiritual commitment were inseparable (598-99), Johnston argues that Dulles’s “religious beliefs, like culture generally, served to give meaning to questions of material power and interest that were part to the Cold War”(6), and Jacobs sees that for many Americans in the Eisenhower years, “the conflict with international communism was in its quintessence a holy war.” (596). Also, see Frederick Marks, “Religiosity and Success in American Foreign Policy,” *The SHAFR Newsletter*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (September 1999), 9-22. Leo Ribuffo suggests that religious interest groups rather than religious ideas “helped to shape the early Cold War” (Ribuffo, “Religion and American Foreign Policy: The Story of a Complex Relationship,” *The National Interest*, Vol. 52 (Summer 1998), 45).

67. Richard V. Pierard, “From Evangelical Exclusivism to Ecumenical Openness: Billy Graham and Sociopolitical Issues,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer 1983), 433-34, 439. Richard V. Pierard, “Billy Graham and Vietnam: From Cold Warrior to Peacemaker,” *Christian Scholar’s Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1980), 45.

68. David E. Settje, “‘Sinister’ Communists and Vietnam Quarrels: The Christian Century and Christianity Today Respond to the Cold and Vietnam Wars,” *Fides et Historia*,

Often *CT* highlighted evangelical-political connections. Eisenhower impressed new evangelicals as a man who prayed for divine guidance when making foreign policy decisions.<sup>69</sup> When Eisenhower, Nixon, Dulles, other Cabinet ministers, members of Congress, and various Governors gathered at National Presbyterian Church for a service *CT* provided coverage.<sup>70</sup> *CT* applauded Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev to join him in a church service during the Soviet leader's visit to the United States in 1959.<sup>71</sup> The annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast of International Christian Leadership also received attention. In February 1961, President Kennedy presented a short address on how US presidents "placed a faith in God," Defense Secretary Robert McNamara read from the Bible, and other politicians spoke.<sup>72</sup> The close relationship between President Johnson and Billy Graham was obvious from one *CT* account of the president telling Graham, "God bless you as you preach."<sup>73</sup> Johnson, who was the first American president in office to attend a modern revival campaign (Billy Graham), stated: "men in the pulpit have a place in political leadership of our people and they have a place in our public affairs."<sup>74</sup> When Barry Goldwater, a Roman Catholic, received the nomination to head the Republican ticket, *CT* presented a story on his religious connections and how a significant number of fundamentalists would support his run.<sup>75</sup> Likely few Americans found Goldwater's question peculiar: "If the Christian Church is not to fight communism, then who on earth is left to resist this evil which is determined to destroy all virtue, decency, thrift, love, friendship and the dignity of the individual?"<sup>76</sup> Politicians who wrote for *CT* included Governor of Texas Price Daniel and Representative Walter H. Judd.<sup>77</sup> The

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Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2000), 82.

69. "Transition in Washington and the Need of Prayer," *CT*, 30 January 1961, 24. Henry was, however, aware that Eisenhower's religious statements were not theologically rigorous.

70. "A Nation Under God," *CT*, 4 February 1957, 28-29.

71. "Did Khrushchev see America?" *CT*, 12 October 1959, 32.

72. "Prayer Breakfast Offers Gospel to New Frontier," *CT*, 27 February 1961, 31.

73. "An Evening at the White House," *CT*, 3 January 1964,

74. "Religious Impact of Johnson's Sweep," *CT*, 20 November 1964, 44; "LBJ Joins 61,000 at Texas Crusade," *CT*, 17 December 1965, 33.

75. "GOP Ticket: The Religious Factors," *CT*, 31 July 1964, 39.

76. "The Church and Communism," *CT*, 16 February 1962, 25. "GOP Ticket: The Religious Factors," *CT*, 31 July 1964, 39.

77. Price Daniel, "God and the American Vision," *CT*, 23 June 1958, 13; Walter H.

journal also presented the religious affiliation of members of Congress and drew attention to members with clergy connections.<sup>78</sup>

But were evangelicals, in one sense, giving policymakers a blank cheque?<sup>79</sup> Were new evangelicals confusing the kingdom of God with the American way of life?<sup>80</sup> On the issue of US economic imperialism, *CT* insinuated, "U.S. capitalism represented God's side of the Cold War."<sup>81</sup> Dissenting voices were rare. On the alleged inconsistency of those who were against recognition of China, Richard D. Beving of the First Presbyterian Church, San Fernando, California asked: "Where were you when the government leaders of Iraq were killed and dragged in the streets, and within 48 hours our government recognized the rebel government?" The difference, Beving argued, was "that Iraq has many oil wells involving substantial American interests while no such comparable economic tie exists in Red China."<sup>82</sup> R. Clinton Taplin referred to the "quasi-Christian capitalism" in America where the "Cross" held high became "molded into one huge, ugly dollar sign."<sup>83</sup> A number of new evangelical leaders championed free enterprise globally and cherished democracy at home while paying less attention to anti-democratic rule elsewhere that received support by American policymakers.<sup>84</sup>

While new evangelicalism upheld the gospel of Jesus Christ as the authentic metanarrative, there was the mixing of evangelicalism and Americanism that provided the conceptual language politicians could use for the legitimation of foreign policy that embraced military solutions. Some argued that there were dangers to such a mixture. In 1957, Joseph Simonson warned: "Because of his own mixed nature of good and evil, man

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Judd, "World Issues and the Christian," *CT*, 23 June 1958, 6-8.

78. For example, see "Senate Religious Census," *CT*, 5 December 1960, 29 and "Religious Makeup of the 87th Congress," *CT*, 2 January 1961, 27. "Religion and Congress," *CT*, 23 November 1962.

79. Wald, "Religious Dimension of American Anti-Communism," 502.

80. In the 1970s, Billy Graham admitted making this mistake. See Pierard, "Billy Graham and Vietnam," 38.

81. Settje, "'Sinister' Communists and Vietnam Quarrels," 86. According to Carl Henry, American tourists and military personnel mirrored the material benefits of free enterprise "that multitudes around the world welcome and covet." See "One Thing We Lack," *CT*, 24 May 1963, 21.

82. "Vacuum Only Apparent," *CT*, 3 August 1959, 16.

83. "The Communist Issue," *CT*, 3 July 1961,

84. Joseph Simonson, "Christian Ideals in Foreign Policy," *CT*, 24 June 1957, 8.

dare not throw away the sword, but he would do well to draw it humbly, knowing that the very deed is proof that he has failed once more in a better wisdom.”<sup>85</sup> Paul Peachey of Eastern Mennonite College lamented a false juxtaposition of Christianity and communism and, particularly, an evangelical focus on political and military balances that caused “a vulgarization” of faith: “We have been coarsened and calloused spiritually by totalitarian struggles fought under slogans of deepest piety. Beneath the euphemisms of military technique we accept mass homicide, and today continue to pour our best resources into the ‘improvement’ of that technique.” Concerning the conflict between Christianity and communism, Peachey feared Americans’ greater reliance on “a strange synthesis of Old Testament national Judaism and the Enlightenment” rather than on the Gospel and understanding that the will of God comprehends all life. Such warnings, however, were uncommon in new evangelical circles.

The new evangelical presentation of “prophetic dualism” that identified the atheistic, brutal, and devious “other” found acceptance by political leaders cognizant both of polling data on the high level of religiosity and of the advantages of dressing pro-military foreign policy decisions with religious metaphors and allusions. The visibility of new evangelicalism did advance with the birth of *Christianity Today*, but the new evangelical alignment with a hawkish foreign policy may have stifled debate among evangelicals for broader and peaceful approaches to global conflicts.

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85. Paul Peachey, “Beyond Christian-Communist Strife,” *CT*, 27 October 1958, 17, 24.